

Attorney Docket No. AOL0024C

U.S. Serial No. 10/773,064

CLAIMS

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1. (cancelled)

2. (cancelled)

3. (cancelled)

4. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein said messages comprise instant messages.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 35, wherein said step of temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user comprises the steps of:

composing a message for the user at said mobile device, said message including at least said user's personal identifier in body of said message;

sending said message to a routing code assigned to an 'unlisted' function on said mobile device;

receiving said message at an instant messaging system;

capturing said user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said user; and

optionally returning notice of said assignment to said mobile unit, so that future messaging is facilitated.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 35, further comprising steps of:

sending a message to said mobile device by said second user;

receiving said message at said instant messaging system;

capturing said second user's personal identifier by an instant messaging system; assigning a routing code to said second user's personal identifier; and sending said message to said mobile user device.

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7. (currently amended) The method of claim 35, wherein said step of transmitting the reply message to the user comprises steps of:

receiving a message at said mobile device from said user, wherein said user's personal identifier has previously been associated with a routing code; and

replying to said received message by means of an ~~an automated~~ a 'reply' function on said mobile unit.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, wherein assignment of a routing code to said user persists for the duration of a user session.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 35, wherein routing codes for assignment ~~to a second user~~ are recycled during a user session if the number of ~~second~~ users exceeds the routing codes available ~~for second users~~.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 35, further comprising the step of:

preventing occurrence of a condition wherein different users are associated with the same routing code.

11. (previously presented) The method of claim 10, wherein said step of preventing comprises any of the steps of:

delaying delivery of a message from said user pending confirmation of a mobile user's interest in receiving said message; and

providing sufficient routing codes that recycling of codes is unlikely to be necessary.

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

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14. (cancelled)

15. (previously presented) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein said messages comprise instant messages.

16. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein said step of exchanging messages comprises steps of:

composing a message for said user at said mobile device, said message including at least said user's personal identifier in body of said message;

sending said message to a routing code assigned to an 'unlisted' function on said mobile device;

receiving said message at an instant messaging system;

capturing said user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said user; and

optionally returning notice of said assignment to said mobile unit, so that future messaging is facilitated.

17. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 37, said method further comprising steps of:

sending a message to said mobile device by said user;

receiving said message at said instant messaging system;

capturing said ~~second~~ user's personal identifier by an instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said ~~second~~ user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said mobile unit.

18. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein said step of transmitting the reply message to the user comprises steps of:

receiving a message at said mobile unit from said user, wherein said user's personal identifier has previously been associated with a routing code; and

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replying to said received message by means of an automated a 'reply' function on said mobile unit.

19. (previously presented) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein assignment of a routing code to said user persists for the duration of a user session.

20. (previously presented) The computer program product of claim 37, wherein routing codes for assignment are recycled during a user session if the number of users exceeds the routing codes available.

21. (previously presented) The computer program product of claim 37, said method further comprising the step of:

preventing occurrence of a condition wherein different users are associated with the same routing code.

22. (currently amended) The computer program product of claim 22 21, wherein said step of preventing comprises any of the steps of:

delaying delivery of a message from said user pending confirmation of a mobile user's interest in receiving said message; and

providing sufficient routing codes that recycling of codes is unlikely to be necessary.

23. (cancelled)

24. (cancelled)

25. (cancelled)

26. The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said messages comprise instant messages.

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27. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said means for temporarily associating the routing codes with the user comprises means for:

composing a message for said user at said mobile device, said message including said user's personal identifier in body of said message;

sending said message to a routing code assigned to an 'unlisted' function on said mobile device;

receiving said message at an instant messaging system;

capturing said user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said user's personal identifier;

sending said message to said user; and

optionally returning notice of said assignment to said mobile unit, so that future messaging is facilitated.

28. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said means for exchanging messages comprises means for:

sending a message to said mobile device by said user;

receiving said message at said instant messaging system;

capturing said ~~second~~ user's personal identifier by said instant messaging system;

assigning a routing code to said ~~second~~ user's personal identifier; and

sending said message to said mobile unit.

29. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said means for transmitting the reply message to the user comprises means for:

receiving a message at said mobile unit from said user, wherein said user's personal identifier has previously been associated with a routing code; and

replying to said received message user by means of a ~~an automated~~ 'reply' function on said mobile unit.

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30. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein assignment of a routing code to said user persists for the duration of a user session.

31. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein routing codes for assignment are recycled during a user session if the number of users exceeds the routing codes available.

32. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 39, further comprising means for:

preventing occurrence of a condition wherein different users are associated with the same routing code.

33. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 39, wherein said means for preventing comprises means for any of:

delaying delivery of a message from a user pending confirmation of a mobile user's interest in receiving said message; and

providing sufficient routing codes for assignment to said ~~second~~ users that recycling of codes is unlikely to be necessary.

34. (previously presented) A method of facilitating messaging between a mobile device and a user, the method comprising steps of:

providing a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages between users and mobile devices;

in response to receiving a message from the user directed to the mobile device, temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user;

including the temporarily associated routing code in the message as a reply address; and

transmitting the message with the included temporarily associated routing codes to the mobile device.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

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receiving a reply message from the mobile device directed to the temporarily associated routing code; and
transmitting the reply message to the user.

36. (previously presented) A computer program product, said computer program product comprising a tangible medium with computer-readable code embodied thereon, said computer-readable code including code means for performing the steps of a method of facilitating messaging between a mobile device and a user the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages between users and mobile devices;

in response to receiving a message from the user directed to the mobile device, temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user;

including the temporarily associated routing code in the message as a reply address; and

transmitting the message with the included temporarily associated routing codes to the mobile device.

37. (previously presented) The computer program product of claim 36, the method further comprising:

receiving a reply message from the mobile device directed to the temporarily associated routing code; and

transmitting the reply message to the user.

38. (currently amended) An apparatus for facilitating messaging between a mobile device and a user, ~~the method comprising the steps of:~~

a plurality of reserved routing codes for exchanging messages between users and mobile devices;

in response to receiving a message from the user directed to the mobile device, temporarily associating one of the routing codes with the user;

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means for including the temporarily associated routing code in the message as a reply address; and

transmitting the message with the included temporarily associated routing codes to the mobile device.

39. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 38, further comprising:
- means for receiving a reply message from the mobile device directed to the temporarily associated routing code; and
 - means for transmitting the reply message to the user.